Human Relations News from the MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON GROUP RELATIONS

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY — LEO P. CARLIN, MAYOR

An official agency created by the Newark Fair Practice Ordinance to carry out the State policy against discrimination based on race, color, creed or national origin.

Room 214, City Hall, Newark, Mitchell 3-6300, Ext. 281

Vol. 4 No. 4 — A bi-monthly summary of facts and trends in human relations and civil rights — November 1961

Unique Spanish Course Started By The City

Mayor Leo P. Carlin says that he is "terrifically pleased" with the interest that City employees have shown in a new course offered them on conversational Spanish.

"Increasing numbers of citizens in our City speak the Spanish language. Our ability to talk with them in their own language," the Mayor says, "can make it easier for us to carry on City services, and can assist them in adjusting to their new surroundings."

Employee response to the course was so enthusiastic that a second class had to be added to the first one originally announced. About 130 people applied for the course with 36 finally selected. City Personnel Officer Samuel B. Finklestein reports that those enrolled in the course represent many government services which have frequent contact with Spanish-speaking persons; most of the "students" are in City inspectional and public health and social service fields. "We also tried to select employees who have exceptional personal qualities—sincerity and sympathy plus understanding."

The course pays particular attention to the Puerto Rican idiom in everyday

(Continued on page 2, column 1)

DON'T FORGET

GIVE

UNITED APPEALS

NEW JERSEY ENACTS BROADER FAIR HOUSING LEGISLATION

New Jersey enacts legislation against discrimination in private housing and extends jurisdiction of its Civil Rights Division to such discrimination

N.A.A.C.P. Files Suit In Federal Court

The Newark Chapter of the NAACP has filed a suit in the Federal District Court against the Newark Board of Education charging that the May 23, 1961 redistricting plan of the Board will help to maintain defacto segregation in the Newark Schools system.

The suit also charges that as a school becomes predominantely non-white the standards decline considerably and substitute teachers increase. It cites cases where sub-standard texts and school equipment can be found in greater numbers in those schools which are predominately non-white.

The NAACP asserts that the concept of the neighborhood school is no longer valid due to the socio-economic conditions of minorityy groups, particularly Negroes in this city.

The Chapter has obtained the services of Attorney Paul Zuber of the now famous Taylor v. Board of Education —New Rochelle School Segregation Case. In addition to Mr. Zuber, Professor Clyde Fergueson of the Rutgers University Law School has worked with the NAACP Education Committee to prepare an alternative redistricting plan for the Board's consideration. This work took some 400 man hours.

The Law Prior to the Recent Enactment

For a number of years, New Jersey had on its statute books a law prohibiting racial or religious discrimination in publicly assisted housing, including housing built with government assistance in the form of FHA or VA guaranteed loans. Enforcement has been vested in the Civil Rights Division, which is a division of the Department of Education. The Division, whose head is an Assistant Commissioner of Education, also enforces the ban on discrimination in employment, in education, and in places of public accommodation.

Owners of private housing, not enjoying government credit or other assistance, were not subject to the law.

Legislative History of Recent Enactment

On January 16, 1961, Bill No. 12, to amend the existing law against discrimination, was introduced in the General Assembly of New Jersey. The measure would have extended the coverage of the law against discrimination to all types of private housing. The only transactions not covered would have been the rental of one unit in a two-family house where the other unit was occupied by the owner, and the rental of part of an owner-occupied one-family house. This bill was passed by the General Assembly (on February 6, 1961) by a vote of 46 to 0.

On June 2nd the Senate adopted a

(Continued on page 4, column 2)

Scientist Assists City In Redevelopment

A well-known social science institution has set up a program to explore the possibilities of creating a bridge between social science researchers and community decision makers.

The Brookings Institution of Washington, D. C. has started a project here in Newark which will enable leading university social scientists to exchange ideas with those social scientists who have left the classroom and are in the fields of housing, employment, race relations and social welfare. The program was formulated in the belief that: knowledge developed through research constitutes a major resource that has not yet been brought to bear effectively on the social and economic problems besetting American cities and, many communities might develop more effective local programs if they perceived the interrelationships between one aspect of city life and another, instead of regarding each problem as a separate obstacle to be overcome.

The first in these series of conferences was held on September 29 and 30 at the Newark Museum. Dr. Herbert E. Striner, the Director of this project for Brookings, was host to a distinguished group of Newark bankers, insurance executives and agency heads, both of private and public concerns.

Spanish

(Continued from page 1, column 1)

conversational Spanish. Regular study assignments are augmented by frequent use of a tape recorder to check on student progress. Language records and motion picture films are used in class. Several government staff members native to Puerto Rico are assisting the instructor, who was formerly in the Federal Government service in Puerto Rico.

Each class meets twice a week, 1½ hours each time, at the Newark Public Library. There are also homework assignments. As Mayor Carlin states, "It is gratifying to find so many of our employees so willing to give up so much of their own free time to contribute, in this way, to maintaining the City as a good place in which we can live together and progress together."

Mayor Carlin (l) looks on as Sir Hugh Foot (r) explains photo to Dr. David Weingast.

U. N. Celebration A Huge Success

On October 23, the City of Newark in cooperation with the American Association for the United Nations—Newark Chapter, Newark Committee United Nations Day Celebration and 100 other organizations, participated for the 8th consecutive year in a United Nations Day Celebration. In July Mayor Leo P. Carlin appointed Dr. David E. Weingast of the Board of Education as chairman of this year's festivities.

The theme of the Celebration was "To save succeeding generations." The guest speaker was Sir Hugh Foot, Ambassador and Representative to the U. N. Trusteeship Council from the United Kingdom.

The Essex House Hotel was again the host for the all day Celebration. The music was supplied by the Newark Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Frank Scocozza. Thomas Hayward, tenor and Carlotta Ordassy, lyric soprano, both of the Metropolitan Opera, were soloists.

An added attraction to this year's Celebration was a special educational forum entitled "The United Nations—Promise and Performance." The topics discussed in this forum were:

1. "The United Nations and Rising Nationalism." Dr. Donald R. Raichle, Newark State College.
2. "The United Nations Charter—What Changes?" Dr. Saul Mendlovitz, Rutgers Law School.
3. "The United Nations and United States Foreign Policy." John R. Inman, Church Peace Union.
4. "The United Nations and the Common Man." Dr. John Wu, Seton Hall University.

This year's U. N. Day Celebration all over the world was marred by the death of Dag Hammarskjold, but the man, through his words and actions, will remain in the hearts of all God-fearing men and women.

"There is a simple basic morality that motivates most people. The great moment is the moment of realization in people that their desire for decency exists not only in their own groups but in others. Someday, I know its people will realize that the United Nations is a reflection of that desire and that if they tear it down, why, they will have to build it up again. And when that day comes, they will say; 'Those guys there at the U. N., they are all right'." These were Hammarskjold's heroic words.

Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council Objects to Light Industrial Project

COMMUNITY RESISTANCE TO LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PROJECT

by Stanley B. Winters, President, Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council

Some Questions and Answers

Question—Why is there opposition to the Housing Authority's proposal that a 40-block area in Weequahic and Clinton Hill be declared "blighted"?

Answer—It should first be pointed out that neither the Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council nor other opponents of this project have ever questioned the need for urban renewal treatment in various parts of the City until now that this specific area has been designated. Among the reasons for skepticism over this Light Industrial Project are the following:

• Eight out of ten persons living within the area (Bergen Street, Avon Avenue, Watson Avenue and Belmont Avenue are the boundaries) is a non-white who most likely has experienced displacement from previous urban renewal projects. He is tired of moving.

• Many small home owners are elderly persons who would have trouble in getting new mortgage money if forced to look elsewhere for housing.

• Persons now renting apartments face either relocation into low-income public housing, which many dislike, or the uncertain search for private quarters uncontrolled by rent laws or inadequately maintained under existing housing and health code enforcement.

• There is suspicion over the "blight" proposal because it did not originate with discussion or participation or explanation among those in the community, in accordance with Federal regulations and democratic procedures. There is no Citizens' Advisory Committee on Urban Renewal for the area.

• People who feel that neighborhood sentiments and needs are being neglected wish to demonstrate that they have ideas, opinions, and aspirations of their own which should be considered by appointed, semi-autonomous boards and authorities, when they draw up plans for an area's future.

Q—What is the reason for the Neighborhood Council's own opposition?

A—We are a broad group with many members living within the affected area. We believe that the "blight" proposal is not in the best interest of the community. Further, hundreds of persons at meetings and at the public hearing on June 29, 1961, expressed strong opposition. We feel this outpouring must be respected, else why hold a public hearing?

Q—What do you mean, it is "not in the best interest of the community"?

A—A "blight" declaration is asked for with re-use intent in mind, if not already on paper. Else an area could live for years under a "blight" label and not know its future.

So far, the only re-use contemplated, as expressed in the title "Light Industrial Project N. J. R-32," is to replace most or all of the housing now standing with factories, warehouses, and other facilities in a light industrial project. Such re-use not only may run counter to law but also, as one of our Council vice-president's said, may be "immoral."

No responsible official has denied this re-use possibility; in fact, at the meeting when the Central Planning Board declared the area "blighted", the Mayor himself in a separate statement "offered thoughts" which termed industrial re-use as the most desirable prospect. Also, we in Clinton Hill lost out on the construction of a new full-sized elementary school which the Board of Education approved last fall when, last January, the school administrators acted on the basis of estimates that industrial re-use—which they apparently regard as certain to come—would "eliminate" over 800 youngsters, thus negating the need for a full-size new school.

Q—But isn't the area "blighted"?

A—This is not easy to answer. The definition of "blight" in State law is quite sweeping and lends itself to several interpretations. Most people think of "blight" as dilapidation of housing; it can be much more liberally construed.

We have yet to be convinced that the state of the "generality" of residential structures in the area is beyond repair. Because we have been denied access to the Housing Authority's surveys of housing, we cannot affirm their accuracy but only rely upon our own observations. (By the way, in the City of Bayonne, the Planning Board made such surveys available to the interested public last spring.) Our observations show houses needing paint, carpentry, and plumbing, but they also show many solid, well-kept houses.

Q—Would you be content to let the area just go along as is?

A—Certainly not. Now that attention is centered on it and public officials have conceded that something should be done, various alternatives should be studied by experts and then offered for community discussion. Some people have suggested "reconditioning," others rehabilitation. The key to any proposal will be the extent to which it preserves community institutions, neighborhood cohesiveness, healthy inter-group relations, and civic pride. These are the lasting values inherent in city life.

Q—Can anything be done while the legislative and legal channels consider the "blight" declaration?

A—Yes, let the city crack down for real on the worst violators of health and housing ordinances, many of whom live out of the area. Let sewers be cleaned regularly, trees pruned, police patrols expanded, lighting modernized, streets paved. Our South Ward councilwoman has suggested a municipal swimming pool, which our Ward alone in the city lacks.

Such measures would reverse hostility, suspicion. They would encourage self-help by residents, restore confidence in local government. Let's give the people a fair return for their taxes and rents.

These are a few suggestions. Many others can be explored so long as no course of action is foreclosed and human values are placed first.

Intergroup Relations At Work

(Editor's Note: Reprinted from a publication written by Audrey Berlin, Member, AAUN-Newark Chapter, entitled, "Living & Learning".)

The title of this column is particularly appropriate this month—as I wish to discuss the advantages of *living* together while *learning* about human relations.

I was privileged this summer to attend a week-long workshop on Community Leadership in Intergroup Relations at Gibbons Campus, Douglas College, Rutgers University. Many of us who consider ourselves liberal and good social thinkers, are truly unaware that even we have our prejudices. The only way to dispel these hidden feelings is to actually live on a social basis with people of different social and ethnic backgrounds.

To work together within a framework of a community. When this atmosphere is set up, we find any feelings—deep seated as they may be—coming to the fore. In an atmosphere where they can be spoken of and dispelled we soon find how false these feelings are.

The workshop was planned to teach us the facts on integration within the community. We learned some of the Negro history (which is somehow never taught in our schools); we learned why education cannot be separate and equal; that property values do not drop when Negroes move into an area; why it is that the idea of white being better than black is fostered in our society. These are just a few of the ideas that were explored in this session . . . but I would like to discuss some of them.

Did you know that Negroes have been a vital part of this country's history—that as far back as the Revolutionary War Negroes fought for the freedom of the colonies? That if you take a group of children aged six (with the same mental abilities) and separate the white children from the Negro children and proceed to educate them in the same manner, that the intelligence quotient of the Negro children will fail to keep up with the white children—not because of a basic lack in their intelligence, but because without the advantage of social interchange and interchange of ideas, the children who come from families of lesser economic advantages will not have the opportunity to learn from children who come from a more advantageous background! This same situation would exist even if you separated two groups of white children but based the separation on economic standards rather than racial lines. In order for our children to get the broadest and best education, we must mix all races and social classes. This way, in years to come there will be fewer and fewer children coming from families with a poor education background.

Did you know that real estate agents use the threat of Negroes or other minority groups moving into an area for their own private interests. They frighten the present home-owner into turning over their property at a lesser price and then they in turn sell this same property to the minority buyer at a much inflated figure? The only one who gains in this transaction is the real estate man.

Did it ever occur to you that in all television, magazines, advertising, school books, movies and what have you, you never see White and Negro people socializing together? The impression created by this lack of mixed colors is that there is something different about Negro people. The fact that they live, work and contribute to all phases of our society is completely ignored. This has the effect of making us feel that there is something quite special about being born white. We know this isn't true. That is, we know it intellectually, but we grow up with this feeling being bred into us.

There is just not space enough to tell the whole story. I hope I have started you thinking of the big problem of Intergroup Relations and the many small problems involved.

Fair Housing Law

(Continued from page 1, column 3)

modified version of the House bill. It exempted from the ban on discrimination sale and rental of one- and two-family houses, unless such houses form part of a development of at least ten houses. It further exempted houses consisting of three apartments, one of which is occupied by the owner. The Senate also struck from the bill a provision which would have authorized courts to grant temporary injuctions pending final adjudication of a matter before the Civil Rights Division so as to preserve the *status quo* and prevent a respondent from disposing of a house before the Division could issue an order.

On August 28, 1961 the General Assembly, by a vote of 53 to 0, concurred in the Senate amendments. The measure was sent to Governor Robert B. Meyner, who indicated that he would sign it into law.

Procedure

The procedure to enforce the new ban on discrimination in private housing is the same as that used heretofore to enforce the ban on discrimination in employment, in places of public accommodation, in education and in publicly assisted housing. Enforcement powers are vested in the Civil Rights Division, which is given the power to receive, investigate, seek to adjust complaints of discrimination, to hold hearings, subpoena witnesses, and to issue cease and desist orders which are enforceable through court action.

NOTE: By the enactment described above, New Jersey has become the eighth state to prohibit racial and religious discrimination in private housing. The other states are Colorado, Oregon, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York and Minnesota. The last three mentioned states passed such laws earlier this year.

Wanted

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR to the Mayor's Commission on Group Relations, Newark, New Jersey. Requirements: B.A. or B.S. degree in sociology, psychology, anthropology or human relations; at least 4 years of full time professional experience in group relations, housing or community organization; or 2 years of full time experience in the above categories, plus a Master's or Doctor's degree in any of the above academic fields. Salary, $6,500-$9,000. Newark residency required upon assumption of duties. Apply Room 214, City Hall, Newark 2, N.J.